MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Office of Water Data and Information Requirements

FROM: G. Tracy Mehan
                  Assistant Administrator

TO: Regional Administrators
                  Water Division Directors
                  Office Directors

        Data and information are vital to the success of our water programs. Yet we often lack
scientifically defensible data and the ability to manage and compare data from a variety of
sources, which hampers our ability to manage our programs, measure environmental results and
effectively allocate our scarce resources. While the difficulties we face are many, there are
actions we can take to help us improve the quality, consistency and accessibility of our data and
information. In January 2003, the Office of Water began implementing specific requirements for
both data and information technology products that result from any Office of Water contract,
information collection request, or direct field activity. I ask that the Regions take similar actions
wherever possible.

        The actions are designed to implement EPA's *Policy Statement on Promoting Multiple
Use of Environmental Data* and the Office of Water's *Information Resources Guiding Principles*
and an important step in ensuring we have high quality data for results-based management.   The
requirements include:

        – using data standards established by the Agency and the Environmental Council of the
        States as well as the Federal Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI)

        – applying specified best practices for developing information technology products such
        as internet applications, databases and water quality models

        – entering water monitoring data into the STORage and RETrieval (STORET) System or
        providing such data in the ACWI Core Monitoring Data Element Standard

        – indexing monitoring, financial, program and facility data to the National Hydrography
        Dataset to enable a watershed management framework.

        The Office of Water will be conducting training sessions on these new requirements over
the next several months. Detailed information is available on the Environmental Data Registry
water standards homepage at http://oaspub.epa.gov/edr/owstd$.startup.

        We also intend to engage our State, Tribal and local partners in developing and
implementing evaluation criteria and guidance for data and information technology products

resulting from both competitive and non-competitive grants. I look forward to working with you on this next phase of acquiring and managing data and information for the national water program.

　　　　For any questions regarding these new policies, please contact Andrew Battin, Senior Information Resource Management Officer at 202-564-0383 or battin.andrew@epa.gov.

Attachments